

Message Text

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ACTION TRSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7950

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON, MR

SUBJECT: WORLD BANK/IMF ANNUAL MEETINGS

REF: STATE 184669

1. GIRM DELEGATION TO SUBJECT MEETINGS WILL BE HEADED BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING AND MINES SIDI OULD CHEIKH ABDALLAHI. ABDALLAHI WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING MOUSTAPHA OULD ABEIDERRAHAMANE AND ONE OR TWO OTHER MIDDLE LEVEL PERSONNEL WHO HAVE NOT YET BEEN NAMED.

2. DELEGATES HAVE NOT YET HAD WORKING SESSIONS TO PREPARE FOR MEETINGS. ABEIDERRAHAMANE DOES NOT FORESEE THAT MAURITANIA WILL BE RAISING ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES, BUT RATHER WILL MOST LIKELY BE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF PRESIETABLE BORROWER POSITIONS, E.G. INCREASE IN FUNDS AVAILABLE THROUGH IDA, LOWERING OF IBRD LOANS RATES, ETC.

3. GIRM DELEGATION MAY SEEK TO REVIEW BROAD OUTLINE OF U.S. PROGRAMS WITH U.S. DELEGATION. IN SUCH AN ENCOUNTER IT IS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT A REQUEST WOULD BE MADE TO RECONSIDER USG DECISION WHICH PROHIBITS AID INFRASTRUCTURAL INVESTMENTS, ESPECIALLY FOR ROAD NETWORKS AND OMVS DIAMA DAM AND IRRIGATION STRUCTURES. WE DO NOT FORSEE ANY ISSUES WHICH U.S. DELEGATION SHOULD RAISE WITH GIRM DELEGATION.

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4. MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING & MINES ABDALLAHI IS WIDELY REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MOST COMPETENT AND INFLUENTIAL SENIOR GIRM OFFICIALS. SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT TO CABINET IN 1968 AS FIRST DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, HE IN LARGE PART HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MAURITANIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HE WAS APPOINTED MINISTER OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT IN 1972, MINISTER OF

STATE FOR NATIONAL ECONOMY IN 1975, AND HIS TITLE WAS REDESIGNED AS MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING & MINES DURING THE AUGUST 1977 CABINET RESHUFFLE. HE IS HIGHLY REGARDED BY HIS PEERS FOR HIS ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITIES AND HAS SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH COMPETENT SUBORDINATES. HE HOLDS ADVANCED DEGREES IN ECONOMICS FROM UNIVERSITY IN FRANCE AND HAS IMPRESSED A SUCCESSION OF FRENCH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, FRENCH EXPERTS, SENIOR U.S. BUSINESS EXECUTIVES, AND US EMBASSY OFFICERS AS A MOST COMPETENT OFFICIALS WHO ALWAYS HAS A COMPLETE COMMAND OF SUBJECT UNDER DISCUSSION AND HAS ALL THE FACTS AT HIS FINGERTIPS. HE CAN HANDLE THE MOST COMPLEX OR TECHNICAL PARTS OF A DISCUSSION WITHOUT REFERRING TO FILES OR STAFF. HIS MEMBERSHIP IN THE INNER CIRCLE OF MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT AND HIS DOMINANT POSITION ON ECONOMIC ISSUES INSURE THAT HIS VIEWS ON ECONOMIC TOPICS ARE HEEDDED. HE HAS ATTENDED NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, INCLUDING THE ANNUAL IMF AND IBRD CONFERENCES (HE WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE AFRICAN GROUP DURING 1973-1975) AND THE IMF INTERIM CONFERENCE ON WORLD MONETARY REFORM (PARIS 1975). ABDALLAHI HAS VISITED UNITED STATES SEVERAL TIMES SINCE 1971 AND HAS EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION OF THE WARMTH AND INFORMALITY OF AMERICANS. HE HAS WORKED CLOSELY AND EFFECTIVELY WITH SENIOR US EMBASSY OFFICERS.

5. DIRECTOR OF PLANNING ABEIDERRAHAMANE HAS HELD HIS PRESENT POSITION SINCE AUGUST 1975. HE REPORTEDLY ATTENDED UNIVERSITY IN MOSCOW. HE WAS AT ONE TIME ONE OF THE "YOUNG RADICALS" OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAURITANIA, BUT RENOUNCED HIS RADICAL OPPOSITIONIST POSITION AND JOINED THE GOVERNMENT AS A CIVIL SERVANT. IN A LONG INTERVIEW IN A JANUARY 1977 ISSUE OF THE GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED NEWSPAPER, HE DISCUSSED HIS EARLIER POLITICAL VIEWPOINT AND SUBSEQUENT CONVICTION THAT WORKING WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OFFERS THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE HIS COUNTRY. ABEIDERRAHANANE FREQUENTLY IS THE MAURITANIAN WORKING LEVEL REPRESENTATIVE TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ON PLANNING MATTERS. HE HAS MAINTAINED A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH EMBASSY AND USAID PERSONNEL WHO DESCRIBE HIM AS A BRIGHT BUT NOT BRILLIANT ECONOMIST WITH SOUND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING. HE WILL HAVE A GOOD GRASP OF ISSUES DISCUSSED AT WASHINGTON MEETING BUT WILL NOT LIKELY BE A SOURCE OF INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS.

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